

Date: November 12, 2021

To: Pima County Board of Supervisors

CC: Jan Lescher, Chief Deputy County Administrator

From: Garrett Ham

Southwestern Fair Commission, Inc. President, Pima County Fair Commission member

Re: Item for the November 16, 2021, Board of Supervisors' Agenda Addendum
Submitted by Adelita Grijalva, District 5 Supervisor

On November 10, 2021, our office received a copy of District 5 Supervisor Grijalva's memo adding to the agenda addendum for the November 16, 2021, Board of Supervisors' meeting a Resolution related to the Pima County Fair Commission. The agenda item calls for discussion/action on a Resolution decreasing the membership of the Pima County Fair Commission from seven to five members. Although it is not specifically stated in the proposed Resolution, it appears clear that this action would include removing all of the current Pima County Fair Commission members (who also serve on the Southwestern Fair Commission Board) and replacing them with new members to be appointed in December 2021 for Districts 2, 3 and 4 for four-year terms, and Districts 1 and 5 for two-year terms, effective January 1, 2022.

This is the first we have heard of any proposal to remove current members of the Commission or change the nomination and appointment process. Both the original Board of Supervisor Resolution establishing the Pima County Fair Commission and Supervisor Grijalva's proposed Resolution, provide that Commissioners can be removed by the Board of Supervisors for cause. We have not been made aware of any issues with any of the Commissioners that would be cause for their removal. I respectfully request that that the Board of Supervisors' discussion and any decision on the proposed Resolution be postponed until the Southwestern Fair Commission Board has had an opportunity to meet with Supervisors and Pima County staff to understand the reasons for the proposal and address any issues or concerns.

The Southwestern Fair Commission has appreciated its long and successful relationship with Pima County in the management of the Fairgrounds. In the last 15 years, Pima County Fair attendance has tripled. Until the pandemic, profits grew exponentially. An Economic Impact Study was conducted by FMR Associates with the study results showing the Fair alone delivered a local economic impact of over \$37,000,000.00. We have made significant capital improvements to the Fairgrounds property to attract new business and events. Even with the continuing effects of the pandemic, we have been able to generate a full calendar year of events for 2022 and into

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2023. Through Board stewardship, the Southwestern Fair Commission survived two years without the benefit of the Pima County Fair and the strong revenues that it generates which is approximately 75% of total annual revenue. Furthermore, this was accomplished without any financial assistance from Pima County.

The oversight and dedication of our current Southwestern Fair Commission Board has been critical in enabling management and staff to make these successes possible. Moving the Board from five to seven members was an important benefit to the Pima County Fair Commission and the Southwestern Fair Commission as we gained valuable experience and expertise from more members. The following list of current members and their backgrounds illustrate the comprehensive and valuable skills that current members bring to the Board:

Garrett Ham, retired business owner, 4-H leader with extensive agricultural expertise

Mark Cowley, Certified CPA

Judy Patrick, former Pima County Director of Land Planning and Development Services

Jim Murphy, former Pima County Board of Supervisor, and Tucson City Council member

Alan Levin, business owner, Port of Tucson

Dr. Ronald Allen, Emeritus Professor U of A Director of Agricultural Experiment Station

Dr. Marvin Selke, Emeritus Professor U of A Animal Sciences Department

We have not been made aware of any issues or reasons behind Supervisor Grijalva's proposed resolution. If the Board of Supervisors have concerns about the leadership or administration of the Pima County Fairgrounds, we believe we should have the opportunity to address the issues internally and with Pima County. Please consider our request to delay the discussion and decision on the proposed Resolution until we have had time to meet with the Pima County Board of Supervisors and Pima County staff to discuss and work to resolve any concerns or issues. Thank you for your consideration.